

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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MURPHYSBORO MEN INDICTED IN CRACK COCAINE CONSPIRACY

Randy G. Massey, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on May 3, 2006, **KEON PENDLETON**, a/k/a “Keon Neal,” age 22, **LAJUAN DEMAR JACKSON**, age 19, and another man who has not yet been arrested, all of Murphysboro, Illinois, were indicted by a Federal Grand Jury sitting in Benton, Illinois, in a one-count indictment, charging them with conspiracy to distribute 5 grams or more of crack cocaine. The violation took place between February 2003, and April 27, 2006, in Jackson County, Illinois.

An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.

PENDLETON is being held without bond pending a July 17, 2006, jury trial. **JACKSON** is being detained pending a May 17, 2006, bond hearing.

The offense carries a penalty of between 5 and 40 years’ imprisonment, a fine of up to \$2,000,000, and a term of 4 years supervised release, upon conviction.

The investigation is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) operation and is being conducted by the Jackson County Sheriff’s Office, Murphysboro Police Department, Drug Enforcement Administration, and United States Marshals Service. The Jackson County States Attorney’s Office also assisted in the investigation. The OCDETF program targets large drug-trafficking organizations.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Amanda A. Robertson.